

Woodbury City Update

April/May 2021 • Volume 22, No. 4



Summer road construction will impact motorists

Road construction season will soon be in full swing. Below is a summary of the major projects taking place on Woodbury roads this summer.

Woodbury Drive from I-94 to Tamarack Road - Washington County project

Washington County and the City of Woodbury will be working on phase two of the Woodbury Drive Improvement Project between I-94 and Tamarack Road that began last year. This year's work will involve the reconstruction of Tamarack Road, Commerce Drive, Rivertown Drive and Hudson Road.

Local roadway upgrades will take place in the commercial areas to the west of Woodbury Drive, including:

Tamarack Road from Preserve Trail to Hudson Place – Work will continue on the expansion of Tamarack Road from Preserve Trail to Hudson Place. Construction will include the addition of a center median and dedicated left turn lanes as well as the reconstruction of trails on both the north and south side of Tamarack Road. Motorists should expect phased road closures of Tamarack during reconstruction and should follow posted detours.

Commerce Drive from Tamarack Road to Hudson Place

Commerce Drive will be rehabilitated from Tamarack Road to Hudson Place. Work will include removing the existing pavement and repairing the base material and minor storm sewer upgrades. In addition, a new trail will be installed along the south side of the roadway from Commerce Drive to Hudson Place. One lane of traffic will be maintained throughout construction; however, periodic lane closures are anticipated along Commerce Drive.

Rivertown Drive from Commerce Drive to Hudson Road – Roadway improvements in this area were completed last year. This year, a new trail will be constructed along the east side of Rivertown Drive. Minimal traffic impacts are anticipated along Rivertown Drive.

Hudson Road – Hudson Road will receive a pavement mill and overlay from Rivertown Drive to Norma Lane as well as from Woodbury Drive to the Woodbury Commons entrance. A new trail will be constructed along the north side of Hudson Road from Rivertown Drive to Woodbury Drive that will include the construction of new retaining walls. Traffic impacts

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Planning continues for future bus rapid transit line

Metro Transit, in partnership with Washington County and Ramsey County, is planning to construct the METRO Gold Line, a 10-mile dedicated bus rapid transit line that will connect Woodbury to St. Paul and other eastern suburbs. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2022 and the Gold Line is expected to be in service in 2024.

Why does the city support the Gold Line?

Although private cars are the most commonly used mode of transportation for Woodbury residents, public transit is an important alternative to automobile use and serves as one part of a multi-modal transportation strategy for the community. A diverse array of transit options not only offers convenience and accessibility, it can also encourage healthy lifestyles and play a key role in achieving sustainability by reducing the need to expand roadways and limiting fuel consumption and air pollution.

The Gold Line will improve residents' access to jobs outside the city, including those residents who use the existing express bus system to get to jobs in Minneapolis or St. Paul. With its all day frequent bi-directional service, the Gold Line will provide added flexibility if someone needs to leave mid-day or stay late. The Gold Line will assist local businesses in their employee recruitment by improving access for non-residents who wish to access jobs and services within Woodbury. It also provides additional economic development benefits by enhancing future development opportunities for those business users that value transit connectivity for their employees and customers.

What is the city's role?

Transit is a regional system under the purview of the Metropolitan Council, the region's metropolitan planning organization. The Metropolitan Council is responsible for design, engineering, environmental review and community outreach as well as building and maintaining the line. The Gold Line project team includes staff from Metropolitan Council, Ramsey County, Washington County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Metro Transit, which is the primary public transportation operator in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, would operate the Gold Line.

The City of Woodbury's involvement has been as a stakeholder. As such, the City Council has adopted a resolution that outlines the city's priorities as they relate to the Gold Line project.

Gold Line master planning

The city kicked off a master planning process in 2020 to guide land use, lighting, landscaping and streetscape elements in the corridor and property adjacent to the three station areas. This work builds a vision for these spaces should the existing conditions in the real estate market change in the future and the property owners decide to investigate redevelopment opportunities spurred by the transit investment.

"The existing mixture of theater, residential and retail uses in the master plan area are complementary to the transit line," said City Engineer Tony Kutzke, who is leading the Gold Line

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Council Perspective

By Mayor Anne Burt

Time to carry forward our parks and trails legacy

When we moved from the Chicago suburbs to the Twin Cities 17 years ago and began house hunting, I quickly noticed the amazing parks and trails system in Woodbury. With young and active children at the time, I was ecstatic at the thought of my neighborhood being connected with other neighborhoods, allowing great distances for walking, inline skating, skateboarding, bike riding and dog walking. I did not see a parks and trails system quite like Woodbury's in other communities in the metro.

We ultimately chose our first Woodbury home, featuring a trail that connected in our side yard. I loved seeing all the people out getting fresh air, walking their pets, teaching their kids how to ride their bikes - in all seasons and all types of weather. The trail created a connectedness with our neighbors.

It also was comforting that I could allow my kids to ride their bike, walk

to a friend's house, or meet at a local park knowing that they could get there easily without encountering much motorized traffic or having to cut through other residents' yards to get there.

While our children have grown, my husband, Jeff, and I continue to be active users of Woodbury's trails, primarily for biking. We especially enjoy waking up at the crack of dawn on summer mornings and hitting the pavement for an hour before the start of our workday. We make a point to go in all directions and use different routes each day. Our favorite route is what we call "The Lakes Loop" through the neighborhoods around Powers, Markgrafs, Wilmes and Colby Lakes. It's spectacular!

During the pandemic, I have been especially thankful for our trails and - based on the amount of people I see out on them - I know our residents have appreciated them as well. We've been able to exercise and take in the

fresh air while safely social distancing and being outdoors.

Parks and trails replacement and funding plan

It's evident that it took decades of thoughtful planning to set aside the land needed to develop our parks and trails system through neighborhoods, around lakes and connecting them to schools and commercial areas.

Now, as the city has grown to more than 76,000 residents, the parks and trails system is aging and needing repairs.

We are proposing to institute a franchise fee on utilities (gas and electric) to help fund future parks and trail facility replacements (see related article below). The estimated franchise fee impact to Woodbury property owners would be \$5 per month (total for gas and electric) for most residential properties. The franchise fee for larger commercial properties will be

more, with many variables influencing the final estimate for non-residential properties.

We want to hear your thoughts about investing in our parks and trails. The City Council will be hosting virtual listening sessions Thursday, May 6, from 10 to 11 a.m. and from 7 to 8 p.m. These sessions will take place via Microsoft Teams, with a link posted on the city's website as the meeting date approaches. If you can't connect with us virtually on May 6, provide your input by sending an email to reconline@woodburymn.gov or calling Parks and Recreation at 651-714-3583.

I'm grateful for the exceptional recreational amenities we enjoy today and appreciate the solid, forward-thinking decisions made by past city residents and leaders. Now, it's our turn to work together in developing a sound replacement plan and carry forward our parks and recreation legacy for future generations.

Proposed franchise fee for parks and trails replacement projects

The City of Woodbury is proposing to institute a franchise fee on utilities (gas and electric) to help fund future parks and trail facility replacements (see related mayor's column above).

The city's extensive parks and trails system - which includes park buildings and structures, courts, fields, playgrounds, irrigation systems, parking lots, trails, and other miscellaneous items - is maturing and the city needs a long-term funding tool to ensure proper replacement of the amenities for years to come.

What is a franchise fee?

Utility franchise fees are commonly found across Minnesota and the country as a way to fund city operations. Under Minnesota Statute (216B.36), cities can impose a fee on utility companies that use the public rights-of-way to deliver service. These utilities then pass on these charges to utility

customers on monthly bills. As fees are collected through monthly customer bills, utilities then return the fees collected back to the city.

The Woodbury Audit and Investment Commission and Woodbury Parks and Natural Resources Commission worked together throughout 2020 to analyze franchise fees and other funding options and develop recommendations for community input and City Council consideration.

Their final recommendations report - and more information about this program - are available at woodburymn.gov/parksfunding.

Cost impact

Multiple funding options are under consideration as detailed in the recommendations report. One of these options (Option 1A) would use a combination of the property tax and franchise fee to allocate approximately \$2.9 million annually to address the

parks and trails replacement funding shortfall.

The estimated franchise fee impact to Woodbury property owners (for Option 1A) would be \$5 per month (total for gas and electric) for most residential properties. The franchise fee for larger commercial properties will be more, with many variables influencing the final estimate for non-residential properties.

Next steps

The city is seeking public input about the funding plan and will be hosting virtual listening sessions Thursday, May 6, from 10 to 11 a.m. and from 7 to 8 p.m. These sessions will take place via Microsoft Teams, with a link posted on the city's website as the meeting date approaches. Feedback also can be shared by sending an email to reconline@woodburymn.gov or calling Parks and Recreation at 651-714-3583.

Woodbury currently has franchise ordinances in the City Code. However, these franchises have expired and proceeding with the implementation of franchise fees will require these ordinances to be updated and renegotiated with utility providers.

Ordinance amendments that result in changes to an established franchise fee take approximately 90 days to implement fully. After such approval, the city would be required to notify the Minnesota Public Utility Commission and then allow time for the utilities to implement into their billing processes.

If approved, the collection of the monthly franchise fee through Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy utility bills is planned to start in January 2022.

Questions should be directed to Parks and Recreation at 651-714-3583 or reconline@woodburymn.gov.

Road construction...from page 1

are anticipated to be minor along Hudson Road.

Access will be maintained to businesses at all times. The roadways will be open to traffic during construction; however, motorists will experience periodic lane closures.

The majority of the work on Woodbury Drive was completed last year; however, periodic, temporary lane closures on Woodbury Drive will be needed this summer to allow for cleanup and landscaping work.

Work on this project will begin in April and conclude in August, weather permitting

Woodbury Drive from Bailey Road to Dale Road – Washington County project

The county will begin work on the Woodbury Drive Corridor Management and Safety Improvements Project between Bailey Road and Dale Road. This project will improve traffic safety operations and increase capacity with a four-

lane divided roadway design and the addition of a roundabout at Dale Road. Work is expected to begin in May and continue into November, weather permitting. A new trail will be constructed along the east side of Woodbury Drive from Bailey Road to Dale Road and the county will be extending the Central Greenway Regional Trail along the west side of Woodbury Drive from Bailey Road to Glacial Valley Road.

In the same area, Metropolitan Council Environmental Services is working on sanitary sewer repairs from Atlas Trail to Lake Road. This project started in January and is expected to be completed in December.

Work on both projects will require temporary lane closures, but the roadway will remain open to traffic throughout construction. A temporary roundabout – using traffic cones and temporary striping – will be installed at the intersection of Woodbury Drive and Ambrose Road to control traffic

speeds entering and leaving the construction zone.

2021 Neighborhood Roadway Rehabilitation Project (Hudson Road west of Radio Drive and the Preserve Area, generally west of Radio Drive and south of Hudson Road) - city project

Approximately 690 property owners and 3.9 miles of roadway will be impacted by the 2021 Roadway Rehabilitation Project. The property owners were first notified last summer and several neighborhood meetings about the project have taken place since last August. All roadways within the residential project areas will be resurfaced. Improvements also include spot curb and gutter repairs; minor sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water system repairs; trail construction; spot trail repairs; and stormwater quality improvements. Work also will include installation of new trails along Landau Drive (on the west side of the road from Tamarack Road to the existing trail at

the east-west trail connection through neighborhood) and Woodduck Drive (east side of the road) from Tamarack Road to Hudson Road. The residential roadways will remain open during construction.

Hudson Road between Globe Drive and Radio Drive also will be resurfaced as a part of this project. Improvements will include trail rehabilitation and minor sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water system maintenance. Hudson Road will remain open during construction; however, motorists will experience periodic lane closures.

Updates will be posted on the city's website and sent via the city's InTouch email notification system. Work will start as early as weather permits, likely in April, and continue through October.

Reduce speed in work zones

As construction proceeds, motorists should expect delays, especially during rush hours, and use the posted detours when applicable. Whenever possible, drivers should use an alternate route. Please always be patient and cautious when driving through work zones.

Road closure notices

If you'd like to receive email notices of city road closures, sign up for the "road closure advisory" list in the city's InTouch email notification system at woodburymn.gov/InTouch.

Project information, including construction phasing maps, will be available on the city's website this spring at woodburymn.gov/RoadConstruction.

If you have questions about any of the road projects above, contact the Engineering Division at 651-714-3593 or engineering@woodburymn.gov.

Gold Line...from page 1

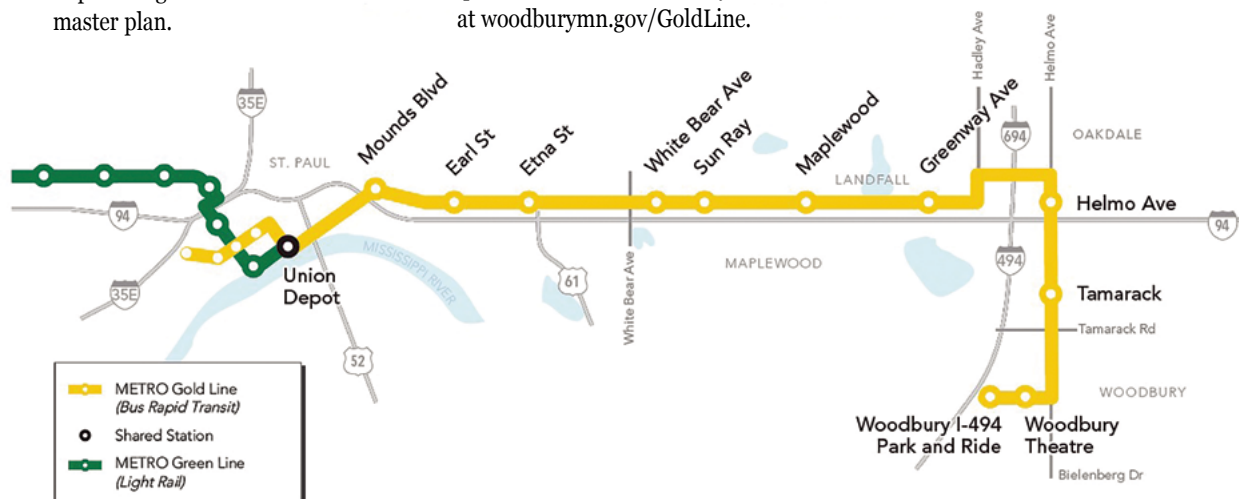
project for the city. "However, it's our obligation as a community to look ahead and plan for scenarios where the property owners in these areas decide to explore redevelopment opportunities."

The city will be engaging with property owners, business owners and residents adjacent to the station in the future to provide greater information on the master plan.

Where to learn more

Work on the Gold Line project has been ongoing for many years and involves coordination between many agencies, including the Metropolitan Council, Ramsey and Washington Counties, the various cities along the line, as well as the state and federal government. A list of frequently asked questions is available on city's website at woodburymn.gov/GoldLine.

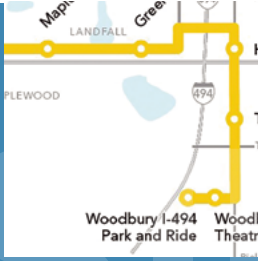
For details, or to sign up to receive emails from Metro Transit about the project and other future public engagement opportunities, visit metrotransit.org/old-line-project. Questions about the Gold Line should be directed to Tony Kutzke, city engineer, at engineering@woodburymn.gov or 651-714-3593.





Road construction summer updates

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Parks and trails funding proposal

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Remain vigilant in the fight against COVID-19

Residents can help stop the pandemic by getting a COVID-19 vaccine. It is one of the best ways to protect yourself and others. The vaccine is provided at no cost. Sign up at mn.gov/VaccineConnector to be notified when you are eligible.

You can help slow the spread COVID-19 by getting tested if you have symptoms, were exposed to someone who tested positive, attended a high-risk event, are actively engaged with people outside of your household, or are returning to a classroom or campus. Visit mn.gov/covid19/get-tested to learn more.

Stay cautious. Facial coverings are still required. Maintaining a distance of six feet away from others is encouraged. Everyday things like washing your hands and staying home when you are sick will also continue to help end the pandemic.

Postal Patron
Woodbury, MN

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Eagle Valley Golf Course ready for another record-breaking summer

Fore! Eagle Valley Golf Course is now open for the season. After a record-setting year of rounds played in 2020, Eagle Valley, a well-maintained course offering a first-class golf experience for players of all abilities, is where you'll want to spend long, summer days.

Discounts offered through the 'Eagle Club'

Looking for a great value on green fees? Join the Eagle Club, the program offers a wide-range of benefits such as one free weekday green fee, green fee discounts all season long, advance reservations, \$60 practice range debit key, free golf for juniors (with each paid adult after 4 p.m. on weekends) and much more!

"The Eagle Club provides the best value to frequent visitors," said Dan Moris, golf course manager. "Along with the discounted greens fees, the

advanced reservations will once again be a huge benefit. We expect to have another outstanding year."

The cost to join the Eagle Club is \$95 per person for Woodbury residents and \$115 for non-residents. Play one round this season to cover the cost of the membership!

New in 2021

Eagle Valley launched a new website in January. Check out the updated site with great aerial photos and individual hole flyovers.

Lessons

New to golf or wanting to sharpen your skills? Golf lessons, provided by Eagle Valley's own PGA professionals, are available for youth and adults. Spring sessions start April 26 with expanded offerings available throughout the summer months.



Golfers also can enhance their skills in the practice bunker and on the 60-station practice range featuring an on-course feel with bent grass tee and five target greens at various yardages to enhance your practice experience

First Tee instruction

Eagle Valley is a host site for The First Tee, a youth instruction program which strives to introduce golf as a life-sport to youth. The First Tee curriculum was developed by experts in the field of positive youth development through sport and is delivered by caring adults (coaches) who have been formally trained by The First Tee.

COVID-19 Guidelines

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Eagle Valley will continue following state guidelines to ensure customers have an enjoyable, first-class golf experience including implementing social distancing at hitting stations; disinfecting frequent touchpoints, golf balls, golf cars and baskets; and limiting the number of guests in the clubhouse.

Eagle Valley Golf Course is located at 2600 Double Eagle Lane off Eagle Valley Drive. Visit eaglevalleygc.com or call the golf shop at 651-714-3750.